



**MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

**GREATER MANCHESTER
POLICE**



English Defence League (EDL)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why are the EDL coming to Manchester?

Their given reason is that this is a national coming together to support their cause however their rationale can change frequently.

Why are they being allowed to March?

The EDL will not be marching through Manchester. Their meeting point is Water St and, at the agreed time, they will then be moved in a controlled fashion from this muster point to the demonstration site in Albert Sq. The police will facilitate this controlled movement to ensure that the group stay together & don't break away into smaller groups. When they arrive at the demonstration site they will be placed within a cordoned-off area where they will remain until the end of the demonstration.

Why can't you ban the demonstration?

Police do not have powers to ban people from coming to the city and protesting. Under Public Order Act legislation, police can place restrictions on demonstrators, such as when and where they can protest, but they cannot prevent protests from taking place as long as they are peaceful.

Having said this, the Police will not tolerate any individuals or groups acting in a racist manner or behaving in an inflammatory way and we will either respond to this immediately, or where this is not possible, officers will be filming the protest and gathering evidence throughout the day so future action can be taken

Won't this create tensions in communities?

Manchester has a very strong community spirit and the Council and the Police will do everything they can to minimise any potential impact the EDL demonstration has locally. Our community cohesion work is all about bringing people together, sharing and understanding knowledge within our communities to help everyone get on. This demonstration will last for just a couple of hours and experience has shown that communities that suffer this sort of disruption usually end up stronger as a result. We are passionate about our work in Manchester and our determination to create strong communities there is stronger than ever.

Will there be scenes of public disorder?

The police have successfully managed other demonstrations like this in Greater Manchester and the best approach is to agree a muster point with the EDL and contain them from that point until they leave. The protestors will be contained and managed by the police at all times.

Policing in large numbers for these events is the most effective method in protecting local residents and businesses. There will be over 300 police on the day from across Greater Manchester and this should reassure.

Should we stay away from the City Centre on the day of the demonstration?

No. Manchester City Centre will be open as usual and police will be working to make sure there is minimal disruption.

The council and police will be working to minimise disruption to the city centre and at the moment there are no planned road closures.

Where can we get up-to-date information on the day of the event?

We understand that young people may be curious about the event and would ask that they follow the live twitter feed at www.twitter.com/GMPolice rather than come and spectate. This can be accessed from computers at public libraries if you do not have a home computer, or access via mobile phone.

What are we advising young people to do?

Visits have been made to local schools and colleges to inform pupils and teachers about the demonstration. The police are in regular contact with head teachers and all teaching staff are advising young people not to get involved in the demonstrations and to take part in diversionary activities instead.

What are we advising businesses in the city centre to do?

We are advising businesses to open as usual. However it is up to each individual business to make their own decision about what opening arrangements they want to make. Some licensed premises have decided to close for the afternoon.

What are you advising local people to do who may want to get involved in the protest?

The police and council are concerned that any counter demonstrations against EDL may increase the risk of violence and disorder and would therefore advise local people not to take part in any counter demonstrations. Community mediators will be instrumental in deterring young people from travelling into the city centre. If people do wish to counter demonstrate there will be a fenced in area similar to the EDL area. People will be asked if they wish to go in there or if they wish to move on.

The EDL has caused a considerable amount of concern in the Muslim community – what are you doing about their worries?

The local Muslim community has been extremely active in working with young people and others in their community. The police and council continue to meet with the community regularly and a plan is in place.

What will you do if there's disorder?

If anyone acts unlawfully, they will be dealt with swiftly and robustly by police.

How many officers will be out on the streets on the day?

GMP is well used to policing large events. Public safety is our priority and we will have a substantial and visible police operation to deal with this event.

The EDL has caused a considerable amount of concern in the Muslim community – what are you doing about their worries?

The third sector and our communities have been extremely active in working with young people and others in their community. The police and the Council continue to meet with key stakeholders and community reps regularly. Manchester City Council, along with key partners in the city including faith groups and traders, are opposed to the demonstration but accept Home Office advice that it cannot be prevented.

How many EDL demonstrators are expected and what will you do if there's disorder?

We do not know the exact numbers. We are working towards 500 - 750 EDL demonstrators coming into Manchester. However we will continue to monitor the situation to ensure public disorder is maintained

If anyone acts unlawfully, they will be dealt with swiftly and robustly by police.

Why were the UK Authorities able to stop Islam4UK demonstrating in Wotton Bassett, but not the EDL here in the GM region?

The Home Secretary made a decision to proscribe Islam4UK as a terrorist organization. Therefore it is a banned organisation. Under the Terrorism Act 2000, a group can be banned if it "commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for, promotes or encourages terrorism or is otherwise concerned in terrorism". Following proscription the march was cancelled by this group.

What happens after the demonstration?

It is crucial that we work hard to restore our communities to normality as soon as possible. It is also important that we open any road closures and bring the Albert Square area back to its normal state. The key is to contain the demonstration and get it out of Manchester as quickly and as peacefully as possible.